



Regional Brownfields Assessment Pilot

Chicago, IL

Outreach and Special Projects Staff (5101)

Quick Reference Fact Sheet

EPA's Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative is designed to empower States, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield is a site, or portion thereof, that has actual or perceived contamination and an active potential for redevelopment or reuse. Between 1995 and 1996, EPA funded 76 National and Regional Brownfields Assessment Pilots, at up to \$200,000 each, to support creative two-year explorations and demonstrations of brownfields solutions. EPA is funding more than 27 Pilots in 1997. The Pilots are intended to provide EPA, States, Tribes, municipalities, and communities with useful information and strategies as they continue to seek new methods to promote a unified approach to site assessment, environmental cleanup, and redevelopment.

OVERVIEW

EPA Region 5 has selected the City of Chicago as a Regional Brownfields Pilot. The west side of Chicago is characterized by mixed residential and industrial land uses. Abandoned industrial properties have created economic blight and hampered redevelopment. In 1993, representatives from the Chicago Departments of Environment, Planning and Development, Buildings, Law, and the Mayor's Office came together to develop a strategy for promoting cleanup and redevelopment of the City's brownfields. The City developed a three-pronged initiative based on this strategy.

The Brownfields Forum is a broad-based public/private policy group including real estate developers, industrialists, bankers, lawyers, representatives from local, State, and Federal government agencies, environmental advocates, and community groups. Between December 1994 and June 1995, over 130 people attended a series of working meetings, developing 65 recommendations for promoting brownfields redevelopment. Forum participants formed project teams and implemented some of the recommendations including regulatory changes, influencing regional planning, involving communities and promoting pollution prevention.

PILOT SNAPSHOT



Chicago, Illinois

Date of Award:
April 1997

Site Profile: The pilot will target brownfields sites located on the City's west side.

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Visit the EPA Brownfields Website at:
<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields>

Also during this time period, the Brownfields Sites Program invested less than \$1 million to investigate, clean up and prepare five sites for private redevelopment. The City worked with community and business groups and local, State and Federal officials which resulted in private capital investment of over \$5.2 million and the creation of over 100 jobs.

The Brownfields Economic Analysis studied a critical connection between economic research, public policy, and the practice of brownfields redevelopment. Research performed by economists at the University of Illinois at Chicago discovered that urban sprawl primarily benefits suburban employers, who are being subsidized by taxpayers and commuters.

- Interviewing stakeholders to determine concerns with sites, levels of participation desired, and concerns relating to the cleanup and redevelopment process; and
- Developing and implementing a stakeholder participation plan for each site.

The cooperative agreement for this Pilot has not yet been negotiated; therefore, activities described in this fact sheet are subject to change.

OBJECTIVES

The objective of this brownfields pilot is to continue the successful work begun by the City of Chicago in two important ways. The brownfields pilot will: assess the responsiveness of environmental and economic redevelopment policies devised by the City of Chicago; and develop a stakeholder participation process for three brownfields redevelopment sites.

ACTIVITIES

Activities planned as part of this pilot include:

Chicago Brownfields Forum Evaluation

- Performing interviews with Forum participants to assess implementation and effects of the 1995 Action Plan; and
- Recording and assessing accomplishments of the Forum's workgroups to better define future redevelopment goals.

Stakeholder Participation Process

- Coordinating with the City's Department of Environment and the Department of Planning and Development to develop brownfields site specific information including site histories, environmental problems, anticipated redevelopment, and interactions with community members;